

Afghan refugees busy making clothes in Mashhad City, Islamic Republic of Iran.

| WORKING ENVIRONMENT |

The Asia and the Pacific region is home to some of the world's largest refugee situations. It also presents a predominantly urban displacement picture. The region holds almost 30 per cent of the global population of concern to UNHCR, or some 9.5 million people. About a third of these are Afghan refugees, who still remain in exile ten years after the start of the largest repatriation operation in UNHCR history. The protection environment is fragile; very few countries in the region have acceded to the 1951 Refugee Convention.

Asia continues to be marked by irregular migratory movements, with refugees in need of protection and livelihood opportunities travelling alongside other migrants. In this context, both the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime and the Almaty Process on Mixed Migration and International Protection provide regional platforms for dialogue and cooperation to protect asylum space and address mixed-migration flows.

The year 2012 saw an escalation of conflict in Myanmar's Kachin State and inter-communal clashes in the country's Rakhine State. Both situations resulted in large displacements of people. At the same time, peace negotiations with minority groups in the southeast of Myanmar raised prospects for the return of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees. UNHCR is working with the Government and others to address the situations in Kachin and Rakhine States and is enhancing its capacity to provide services in south-eastern Myanmar in 2013.



ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

| Strategic objectives in 2013 |

○ *Safeguard protection and asylum space, including in the context of mixed migration and in urban settings*

UNHCR participates in multilateral forums to foster more systematic responses to mixed migration and expand refugee protection in the region. Significant progress was made in the context of the Bali Process to implement the Regional Cooperation Framework on mixed migration agreed at the Regional Ministerial Conference held in March 2011. A Regional Support Office (RSO) was opened in Bangkok by the two co-chairs, Australia and Indonesia, in September 2012. The RSO will strengthen cooperation on refugee protection and international migration through information sharing, capacity building and the pooling of resources. The RSO also plans to organize a Regional Roundtable on Irregular Migration by Sea in order to develop bilateral and multilateral arrangements among States affected by irregular maritime movements.

Similarly, consultations were held in 2012 among the Central Asian States on the adoption of a Regional Cooperation Framework and Regional Action Plan, formally launching the Almaty Process on Mixed Migration and International Protection. These accords offer differentiated but protection-sensitive border management and asylum systems tailored to the subregion. In the second half of 2012, UNHCR and IOM co-hosted the first meeting of national coordinators from the Central Asian States. UNHCR, IOM and the Government of Kazakhstan will organize the second Ministerial Conference on Refugee Protection and International Migration scheduled for mid-2013.

In 2012, UNHCR initiated a mapping of its Policy on Refugee Protection and Solutions in Urban Areas. The exercise covered operations in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (China), India, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Malaysia and Thailand. The review concluded that UNHCR's efforts had only had a limited effect in ensuring that refugees in urban settings had access to basic rights and services. This is due in part to the absence of appropriate legal and institutional frameworks resulting in unpredictability of States' engagement. In 2013, UNHCR will advocate for more collaborative engagement by States and other actors in refugee protection.

Civil society in the region plays a major role in advocating for the better protection of asylum-seekers and refugees, including through national mechanisms. In this regard, dialogue between the Government of India and Indian civil-society partners supported by UNHCR contributed to a marked improvement in the quality of asylum in India in 2012. A highlight was the decision by the Government to provide eligible refugees with long-term visas and work permits. UNHCR will strengthen support for civil-society actors advocating with governments for better asylum conditions in the region.

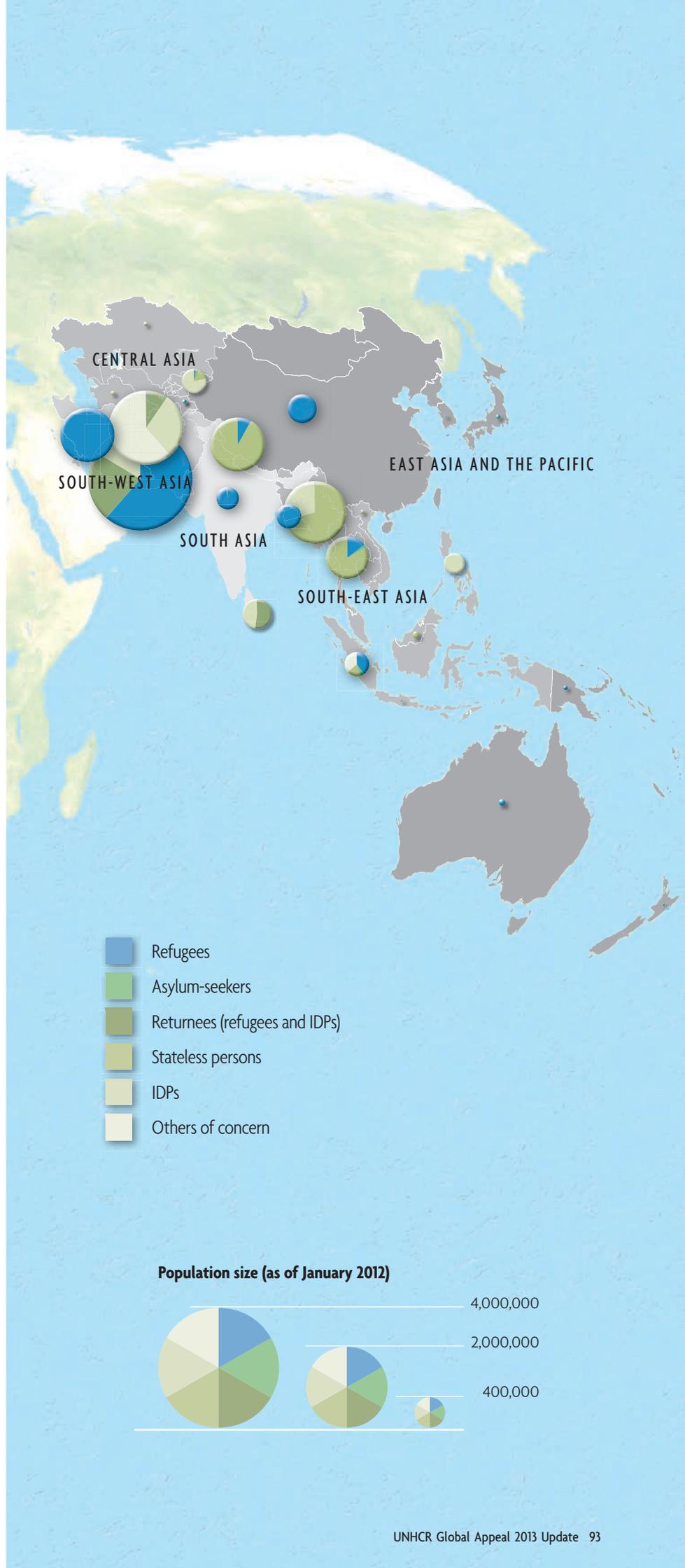
In Indonesia and Malaysia, the challenge is to deliver protection in an environment of mixed migration that lacks the appropriate legal frameworks, with an ever increasing number of asylum-seekers. The situation highlights the need for a regional approach to refugee protection and international migration issues. UNHCR will continue to fulfil its mandate responsibility for registration and refugee status determination (RSD). It will also monitor detention cases and work to secure the release of refugees, and support a variety of community development, health and education programmes.

○ Find solutions for protracted refugee situations

In 2012, a conference on Afghanistan hosted by the Swiss Government launched a Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees, to support Voluntary Repatriation, Sustainable Reintegration and Assistance to Host Countries. The strategy, developed by the Islamic Republics of Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan with UNHCR support, aims to strengthen community-based investments in areas of high return in Afghanistan, preserve asylum space and assist host communities in asylum countries. At the end of 2012, the Quadripartite Steering Committee had been formed, country work plans had been elaborated and implementation of the strategy had started in the three countries, including through strong advocacy and fundraising initiatives.

The number of refugees from Bhutan living in camps in Nepal has been reduced from 110,000 to some 45,000 since the onset of a large-scale resettlement programme in late 2007. The remaining refugees live in two camps, down from seven previously. UNHCR has submitted to the Government for approval an inter-agency initiative which would benefit both refugee and host communities.

Political developments in Myanmar have raised new prospects for durable solutions for IDPs and refugees. UNHCR, together with governments and partners in the region, primarily in Myanmar and Thailand, is starting preparations for a possible eventual voluntary repatriation. This includes the profiling of refugees to determine their return intentions and reintegration needs in areas of return in the south-east of Myanmar.



UNHCR supports some 239,000 displaced people in south-eastern Myanmar by monitoring protection, engaging in advocacy with the Government and improving access to essential services. In 2012, UNHCR expanded operations in this region to gain access to more than 100,000 individuals in need of assistance as well as around 2,000 spontaneous returnees from Thailand. This trend is expected to continue in 2013 as permission is granted to work in previously inaccessible areas.

The return of Sri Lankan refugees, mainly from India, also continues at a steady pace. UNHCR is preparing for the gradual voluntary repatriation of Sri Lankan refugees from other countries.

○ *Ensure protection and durable solutions for IDPs*

In Myanmar, inter-communal violence among residents of Rakhine State in June 2012 led to the internal displacement of some 70,000 people. UNHCR has assisted some 45,000 people in Rakhine State, based on the principles of neutrality and impartiality. The Office stands ready to support the Government's efforts to address the root causes of the disturbances, including statelessness and legal status.

In 2013, UNHCR Kyrgyzstan will continue to support the sustainable reintegration of those displaced by ethnic violence in the country in June 2010. Programmes will cover community development, coexistence, livelihoods and protection. In 2013, UNHCR will focus on early warning and emergency preparedness in Central Asia, while preparing for the conclusion of our engagement in the IDP situation in Kyrgyzstan by 2015.

In Pakistan, there are some 745,000 IDPs as a result of ongoing security operations in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. UNHCR will help the Government with registration, camp management and coordination, the provision of assistance to host communities and the protection of vulnerable groups.

UNHCR estimates that there are some 500,000 people who have been uprooted from their homes by conflict within Afghanistan. Many have been displaced more than once, owing to lack of protection or livelihood opportunities in areas of return, or because of food insecurity or natural disasters. UNHCR's work with IDPs in Afghanistan in 2013 will focus primarily on assisting conflict-induced IDPs to return and reintegrate.

In Sri Lanka, the number of IDPs has decreased substantially. Following the closure of Menik Farm camp in September 2012, smaller numbers of people remain displaced in the north and east of the country. UNHCR will continue to advocate for durable solutions for the remaining IDPs while reinforcing support for voluntary repatriation of refugees and reintegration in Sri Lanka.

In the Philippines, UNHCR leads, together with the Government, the protection cluster for the IDP situation in Mindanao, as part of the joint UN response to the situation. It is working with civil-society partners to raise the capacity of the Government to monitor protection and provide assistance to displaced communities.

○ *Reduce and prevent statelessness and protect stateless persons*

Turkmenistan acceded to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness in 2012 and provided citizenship to 3,300 stateless persons. This makes it the first country in Central Asia and the third in the Asia-Pacific region to be party to both statelessness conventions. UNHCR will help the Government to implement its obligations under the statelessness conventions in 2013.

UNHCR foresees a continuing need to assist some 800,000 Rakhine State residents without citizenship or access to basic services. The situation has been aggravated by inter-communal violence which began in June 2012. UNHCR is pressing for a solution to this particular statelessness situation and is prepared to assist with technical expertise.

UNHCR works with the Government of Bangladesh to address the plight of some 30,000 registered refugees who reside in two official camps. In addition, there are an estimated 200,000 people from Rakhine State who are in the country without any legal status, including some 40,000 unregistered individuals who dwell in two makeshift settlements. The undocumented population are considered by UNHCR to be in a refugee-like situation and therefore of concern to UNHCR. Though UNHCR does not provide any significant assistance to the undocumented residents of Rakhine State, the Office attempts to monitor the well-being and protection of this population within the prevailing limitations imposed by authorities.

UNHCR has improved its collaboration with the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights, which is active in the field of statelessness.

○ *Maintain operations in high-risk areas and ensure staff safety*

Afghanistan's challenging and volatile security environment requires UNHCR to set up remote delivery and monitoring mechanisms with local partners. Security remains a concern, especially in light of the planned withdrawal of the International Security Assistance Force. Some attacks have targeted the aid community, forcing UNHCR to continuously review the security of its personnel and programmes in the country. In Pakistan, insecure conditions in some locations hamper protection and the delivery of assistance. To improve outreach, UNHCR works closely with government counterparts and local partners.

CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE REGION
PLAYS A MAJOR ROLE IN
ADVOCATING FOR THE BETTER
PROTECTION OF ASYLUM-
SEEKERS AND REFUGEES,
INCLUDING THROUGH NATIONAL
MECHANISMS

Financial information

The initial 2012 budget of USD 502 million for Asia and the Pacific was increased to USD 522.1 million in order to cover additional needs for emergency assistance to the recently displaced populations in Myanmar.

For 2013, the overall budget is set at USD 526.4 million. However, this budget will be further revised to address additional needs related to the situation in Rakhine State in Myanmar, which could not be assessed at the time the budget was approved.

The budget for South-West Asia represents 67 per cent of the total budget in Asia, while the remaining 33 per cent is shared by 19 operations. This prioritization aims to avoid funding shortfalls that could otherwise undermine the momentum for solutions gained by the launch in 2012 of the multi-year Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees.

Challenges

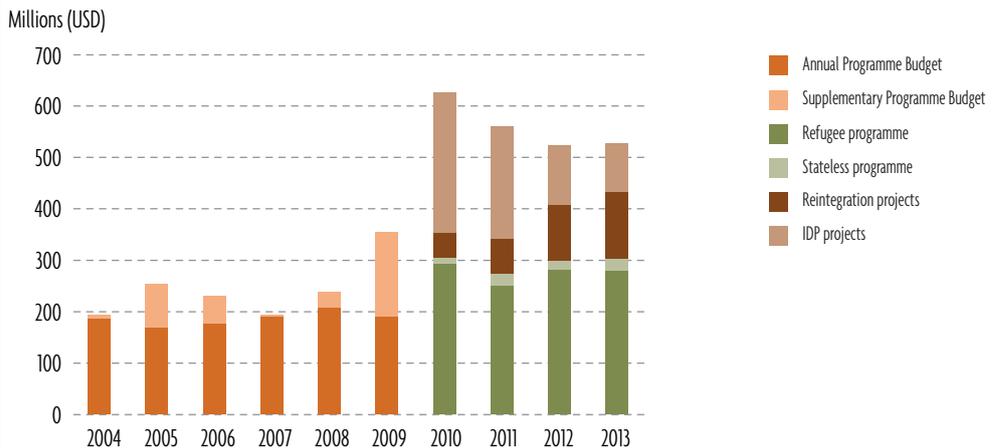
The Asia and the Pacific operational region covers 48 countries and territories and 11 time zones. The challenges in the various working environments are equally diverse.

Many countries in the region have not acceded to the 1951 Refugee Convention and lack legal frameworks for refugee protection. Protracted refugee situations in many countries have led to host-community fatigue and in some cases, secondary movements. Many States in the region consider asylum-seekers on their territory as people in transit and so generally do not provide effective protection.

A key priority for UNHCR is to improve protection, including protection-sensitive entry systems and conditions of stay for refugees. Another is to discourage onward movements, including through the promotion of refugee livelihoods and support to host communities.

The lack of security in many parts of Afghanistan may drive more internal displacement and has drastically curtailed UNHCR's ability to deliver assistance and pursue durable solutions. The United Nations has access to less than half the country, and ensuring staff safety and security has become more of a challenge. ■

UNHCR's budget in Asia and the Pacific 2004 - 2013



UNHCR BUDGET IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC | USD

| Operation | 2012 Revised budget (as of 30 June 2012) | 2013 | | | | Total |
|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| | | PILLAR 1 Refugee programme | PILLAR 2 Stateless programme | PILLAR 3 Reintegration projects | PILLAR 4 IDP projects | |
| SOUTH-WEST ASIA | | | | | | |
| Afghanistan | 139,665,105 | 38,226,788 | 0 | 65,740,767 | 27,352,675 | 131,320,230 |
| Islamic Republic of Iran | 53,221,255 | 59,558,289 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 59,558,289 |
| Pakistan | 143,905,331 | 59,930,184 | 1,489,107 | 59,679,717 | 40,215,305 | 161,314,312 |
| Subtotal | 336,791,691 | 157,715,261 | 1,489,107 | 125,420,484 | 67,567,979 | 352,192,831 |
| CENTRAL ASIA | | | | | | |
| Kazakhstan Regional Office ¹ | 9,302,017 | 5,261,284 | 1,861,892 | 0 | 499,339 | 7,622,514 |
| Kyrgyzstan | 10,251,302 | 3,135,329 | 815,368 | 0 | 3,546,100 | 7,496,797 |
| Tajikistan | 1,881,190 | 1,813,179 | 129,169 | 0 | 0 | 1,942,348 |
| Turkmenistan | 1,594,784 | 487,072 | 554,017 | 0 | 0 | 1,041,089 |
| Subtotal | 23,029,293 | 10,696,863 | 3,360,446 | 0 | 4,045,439 | 18,102,748 |
| SOUTH ASIA | | | | | | |
| India | 13,211,411 | 12,927,790 | 78,823 | 0 | 0 | 13,006,613 |
| Nepal | 15,717,609 | 9,917,356 | 1,403,756 | 4,258,080 | 0 | 15,579,191 |
| Sri Lanka | 17,741,728 | 7,686,638 | 113,392 | 0 | 2,450,569 | 10,250,600 |
| Subtotal | 46,670,749 | 30,531,784 | 1,595,971 | 4,258,080 | 2,450,569 | 38,836,404 |
| SOUT-EAST ASIA | | | | | | |
| Bangladesh | 14,500,885 | 11,682,453 | 94,490 | 0 | 0 | 11,776,942 |
| Cambodia ² | 949,248 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Indonesia | 5,911,688 | 7,676,140 | 190,694 | 0 | 0 | 7,866,834 |
| Malaysia | 16,562,272 | 16,813,060 | 563,362 | 0 | 0 | 17,376,422 |
| Myanmar | 24,596,797 | 0 | 12,064,787 | 0 | 14,098,616 | 26,163,403 |
| Philippines | 7,598,497 | 808,120 | 1,513,369 | 0 | 6,105,650 | 8,427,140 |
| Thailand | 22,347,137 | 23,003,978 | 693,675 | 0 | 0 | 23,697,653 |
| Thailand Regional Office ³ | 5,447,307 | 6,689,357 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6,689,357 |
| Timor-Leste | 207,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Viet Nam | 910,500 | 0 | 400,000 | 0 | 0 | 400,000 |
| Subtotal | 99,031,330 | 66,673,107 | 15,520,378 | 0 | 20,204,266 | 102,397,750 |
| EAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC | | | | | | |
| Australia Regional Office ⁴ | 2,144,316 | 2,859,382 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2,859,382 |
| China Regional Office ⁵ | 5,765,054 | 4,211,144 | 152,574 | 0 | 0 | 4,363,718 |
| Japan | 4,758,452 | 4,430,057 | 48,176 | 0 | 0 | 4,478,233 |
| Papua New Guinea ⁶ | 1,375,249 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Republic of Korea | 2,152,250 | 2,352,304 | 187,348 | 0 | 0 | 2,539,652 |
| Regional activities | 412,770 | 600,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 600,000 |
| Subtotal | 16,608,090 | 14,452,888 | 388,098 | 0 | 0 | 14,840,986 |
| Total | 522,131,153 | 280,069,902 | 22,354,000 | 129,678,563 | 94,268,253 | 526,370,718 |

¹ Includes the Office of the Regional Representative which provides support to countries in the subregion.

² From 2013, Cambodia will be reported under the Thailand Regional Office.

³ Includes the Office of the Regional Coordinator which provides support to countries in the subregion.

⁴ Includes activities in New Zealand and Pacific Island countries as well as additional support to Papua New Guinea.

⁵ Provides support to Mongolia.

⁶ From 2013, Papua New Guinea will be reported under the Australia Regional Office.